

# Dynamics of Human Relationships and Identity issues in *Mango Coloured Fish* by Kaveri Nambisan

**B Kalyani**

Research Scholar (Dept of English)  
Andhra University, Visakhapatnam

## ABSTRACT

Kaveri Nambisan is an Indian novelist who put her opinions on feminist perspective in her works with reference to prejudices, sensitive emotions, expectations, disappointments and confusions of women in Indian context. Her work *Mango Coloured fish* is novel in which she discusses the central character Shari's identity issues and how she came long way while herself fighting against her own thoughts. This paper focuses on experiences of central character when masculine traits dominate and disregard feminine emotions. The gender differences in cultural aspects and how men and women move on with the challenges and dynamics of relationships are explored in this paper and also defines the role of Shari in predominantly male dominated society. The central character aspires for love and happiness in family life but they suffer humiliation and disappointment in real life and her own people could not instigate to be independent and give motivation to move forward in life. Eventually, the paper ends giving brief view of transformation of Shari and how she learns to transcend all her issues and establishes her own self devoid of opinion of others.

Key words : Identity, humiliation, gender, challenges

## INTRODUCTION:

*Mango coloured fish* is fictional work by Kavery Nambisan which tells us of central character Shari who is caught in complex of uncertainties, disillusionments and lack of identity issues. She finds difficult to understand the dynamics of relationships around her who always compels their ideas and beliefs upon her rather let herself take charge of her decisions, as a result she suffers loneliness and develops different notions on institution of marriage. This paper explores the dynamics of relationships which includes her mother, a very

stifled ,dominating and sophisticated one and her too perfect sister . Her father being submissive to her mother, has creaseless disposition with a business morality that forbids offending anyone and her brother whom she adores and had right track of communication about opinions on all matters. Another couple whom Shari mostly look up to them more than her own parents is Aunt Paru and uncle, they are childless and Shari considers them as surrogate parents. The entanglement of all these relationships make her question the possibilities of having finer social connections.

Shari is a girl who is impelled by inner voice to feel loved as an individual rather than as a responsible daughter who is not always against the social system. But with her mother's intrusion into everything makes her feel dejected with no voice speaking for herself ,Shari deals with loneliness. Before she begins her new life with Gautam, her fiance ,she decides to leave to her brother Krishna and his wife Teji where she learns about their sweet and cozy relationship that makes her jealous of them .With Krishna she shares almost everything but never opens her heart . Krishna and Teji host Shari a few weeks before her wedding where she learns the prerequisites of a perfect relationship and acknowledges what she is lacking with her relationship with Gautam. She fails to communicate with her brother and concedes the lie that she was not happy deep inside. Later, she realizes that Gautam was not made for her who sort of never encourages her passion, never understood her wholly and he was looking for something that completes his image when he blurts out “ *Its you i want .You can be moulded* “( pg 73 ).Shari has this urge to change physically into most pleasing woman when she was with Gautam and not being herself and thinks of not seeing him with her mind because he appears like an autocrat and too disciplined person in office. The urge to be more desirable ,soft and appealing increases when she is with Gautam crushing her natural desire to be her own by craving an exquisite household to live after marriage .while Shari's mother tries to impress her by saying that Gautam will bring stability and security in her life “ *You must have a purpose in life* “ (74). The actual purpose seems to be sharing a life with an emotionally stoic person who never really loves her, keeping herself, her choices and her freedom at the brink of merging. Eventually Shari learns that marriage can wait while its freedom of life that needs to be explored and find out answers for the questions of marriage that is multi layered before actually getting into one .This can be

evidently seen in the final chapter of novel where in Shari removes her engagement ring and carefully puts in her handkerchief signifying her wish to put marriage on pause to explore her inner world.

Kavery Nambisan portrays Shari as one who cannot hinder her desire for inner first love And cannot deny her attraction towards Naren. Naren is a blind boy with whom shari falls in love but unable to express her love till last though she shares soul connection with Naren but cannot share her grief with him as she could share happiness with him. “ *Sometimes we would think the same thought and it was sipping through one straw* “ (99). She writes to Naren that she loves him but lied that she loved Gautam and getting married to him soon and the letter written by her to Gautam with the same lie spilling that “ *I love you, my dearest* “(85) tells she is in confusion state with her relationships, deceiving herself and people around her .Shari confessed that when she is with Naren, her mind moved in unpredictable ways leading to her sympathy converted into love towards him, in this process of loving someone like teenager she discovers her true self of making choices, taking decisions and getting aware of herself in the final chapters of novel when Shari travels to native village of Naren to express her love ,she finds grueling to convey and her feeling and that inability to actually understand whether it is love or attraction between them and could find no flaws in their relationships “ *But there must have been a flaw somewhere .If i could see it,touch it,know what it was,i would set it right .But I can't see a flaw .It's Not my fault or his.*”(243). This reveals the dubious nature of Shari about her relationship with Naren.

The women in Shari's life include her mother Bimmy who is very dominating in nature who often controls the life of her daughter leaving a trace of step motherly attitude and There is an emotional distance that freezes between Shari and her mother that compels her to listen. On the other hand ,the discrimination is clearly visible in their relationship in which mother gives more love to her son than her daughter .The gender inequality followed by the society has confused Shari that inhibited individuality of women. Shari's friend Yash represents a character in novel who fails to have trustworthy marriage and gets herself turned into stereotyped typical Indian wife with domestic chores. This marriage raises uncertainty in the mind of Shari after she discovers her friend's adultery . while Yash confides to her close friend that she would not wreck herself with one person “ *I*

*am not so stupid that i will wreck myself with one person . I use men and spit them out like seeds . Really you must believe me .(120).* This contemporary generational trauma of Yash has an illusion and frustration that there is nothing sacred in marriage and she asserts on Shari that a happy marriage is giving the impression of being happy and that has nothing really to be happy. The interpretation of Yash about marriage infidelity appears pervasive to Shari and thrusts more upon her bewilderment on relationships .Yash claims that arranged marriage is more reliable than love marriage giving impression of arranged marriage work better than so called love marriage which raises doubts in mind of Shari. While Kavery Nambisan focuses on the dilemma of character Shari who constantly falls into regarding her feelings for men in her life ,stating that she loves every man in her life but cannot marry them which proves Nambisan's tricky situation of putting her characters away from traditional thoughts . Another relationship aspect which Kavery Nambisan majorly talks in the novel is about the couple aunt Paru and uncle who play major role in the life of Shari. They are childless couple who admire and adore shari as their own child and their relationship teaches Shari the goals of perfect kind of marriage but the conclusion of this couple turns out to be tragic which questions Shari attitude towards flawless relationships. Shari considers her own parents marriage though peaceful yet lacked love but in the case of Aunt Paru and uncle ,she witness what love did to two of them is unblended .she got vague clues given by her mother that led to comprehension of uncle being considered as useless husband while Shari herself reflected on him as good husband and loving father like figure. Uncle's drinking habit which mostly causes disturbances between the couple aids in losing the sparkle between them ,this as an incident interferes with Shari's idea of perfect relationship. Most of the time ,she tries to save their relationship by begging uncle to hide his drinking habit but he dismisses Shari's attempts to rescue him. With Shari sheltering uncle at every possible situation , leads to unknown fear within herself of intruding thoughts and suspicion in relationships .Eventually ,uncle leaves and never comes back to aunt Paru directing that she became widow ,mystifies that there is no perfect relationships in this world . All that people show is masked and there are a lot of problems behind disguised identities with no hope of contentment and security. Shari let herself free from all bonds of life to explore her identity as an individual .She stays alone in a hostel away from family and her friend Yash against her mother's wish and realizes the lie she has been living all this while. She feels that it is easier to think

when you are far away from home and connects with nature experiencing every speck of air and watches the busy life of others while easing herself from all intruding, contemplating and hindering thoughts and deeds.

## CONCLUSION:

This paper summarizes the varying relationship attitudes and identity issues that prevail throughout the character of Shari. The change in the temperament from being suffering from loneliness to actually fond of loneliness at the end of novel showcases the transposed tone of novel .While introspecting her inner self, Shari transforms from having chaotic mind to clarified thought process leading to complete awareness of relationships around her. She analyzed frame of mind and dissected the institution of marriage of all men and women in her life and actually reached a point of discovering herself to be able to take decision on her own. When she wished to be independent in her life and lacked strength, she sought to resort to family and friends and sought freedom in every aspect of her life .Finally, Shari managed to enclose all her issues in meaningful compartments like the issues she faced as daughter resentment against parental control and disillusionment in love while looking deep within herself .

## References

*mango coloured fish.* (n.d.)

<http://hdl.handle.net/10603/380406>

<http://hdl.handle.net/10603/293290>

*feminine mystique.* (n.d.).